



SUMMARY OF THE 20TH MEETING OF THE CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE: 29 MARCH – 2 APRIL 2004

The 20th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC-20) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) convened from 29 March to 2 April 2004, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The meeting drew together some 150 participants representing governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Participants met in Plenary throughout the week to discuss 23 agenda items on a range of topics, including review of significant trade in specimens of Appendix II species (RST); review of criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II; periodic review of animal and plant taxa in the Appendices; transport of live animals; budget; trade in hard corals; trade in alien species; sea cucumbers; seahorses; and sharks.

In addition, ten working groups were convened, many continuing from AC-19, to address the: RST; relationship between *ex situ* production and *in situ* conservation; process for registering operations that breed Appendix I animal species for commercial purposes; transport of live animals; trade in hard corals; control of captive breeding, ranching and wild harvest production systems; improving regional communication and representation; sea cucumbers; and sharks. A drafting group was also set up to review the criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II.

Although the AC had a burdensome agenda, delegates worked largely in a collegial manner, with many of the more difficult issues addressed in working groups. The final outcomes of the AC will be forwarded to the thirteenth Conference of the Parties (COP-13), to be held in Bangkok, Thailand in October 2004.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CITES

CITES was established as a response to growing concerns that over-exploitation of wildlife through international trade was contributing to the rapid decline of many plant and animal populations around the world. The Convention was signed by 80 countries in Washington, DC, US, on 3 March 1973, and entered into force on 1 July 1975. There are currently 165 Parties to the Convention.

CITES Parties regulate wildlife trade through controls and regulations on species listed in three Appendices. Appendix I lists species endangered due to international trade. Trade of such species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Appendix II species are subject to strictly regulated trade based on quotas and permits to prevent their unsustainable use, and controls aimed at maintaining ecosystems so that species do not become eligible for Appendix I listing. Appendix III lists species that are subject to domestic regulation, where a Party requests the cooperation of other Parties to control international trade. In order to list a species in Appendices I or II, a Party needs to submit a proposal for COP approval, with scientific and biological data on population and trade trends. The proposal must be adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of Parties present at a COP. As the trade impact on a species increases or decreases, the COP decides whether the species should be transferred between or removed from the Appendices. There are approximately 5,000 fauna species and 28,000 flora species listed in the three CITES Appendices.

CITES also regulates international trade of species through a system of permits and certificates that are required before specimens enter or leave a country. Each Party is required to adopt national legislation and to designate a Management Authority responsible for issuing these permits and certificates based on the advice of a designated Scientific Authority. These two national authorities also assist CITES enforcement through cooperation with customs, police or other appropriate agencies. Parties maintain trade records that are forwarded to the CITES Secretariat annually, enabling the Secretariat to compile statistical information on the global volume of trade in listed species.

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of CITES	1
Report of the Meeting	2
A Brief Analysis of AC-20	11
Things to Look For Before COP-13	12

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The operational bodies of CITES include: the Standing Committee (SC) and the scientific advisory committees, namely the Animals Committee (AC) and the Plants Committee (PC); the Nomenclature Committee; and the Identification Manual Committee. As scientific and technical support bodies, the role of both the AC and PC is to: undertake periodic reviews of species to ensure appropriate categorization in the Appendices; advise when species are unsustainably traded and recommend action; and draft resolutions on animal and plant matters for consideration by the Parties.

The AC is composed of regional representatives, who are elected at COP meetings, with the number of representatives weighted according to the number of Parties within each region and according to the regional distribution of biodiversity. The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected by the regional AC members.

The Chair of the AC is Thomas Althaus (Switzerland). The AC regional representatives are: Edson Chidziya (Zimbabwe) and Michael Griffin (Namibia) for Africa; Mohammad Pourkazemi (Iran) and Schwann Tunhikorn (Thailand) for Asia; Sixto Incháustegui (Dominican Republic) and Marco Polo Micheletti (Honduras) for Central and South America and the Caribbean; Thomas Althaus (Switzerland) and Katalin Rodics (Hungary) for Europe; Rodrigo Medellín (Mexico) for North America; and Rod Hay (New Zealand) for Oceania.

CITES COP-12: COP-12 convened from 3-15 November 2002, in Santiago, Chile. Delegates considered 60 proposals and over 60 resolutions on a range of topics, including strategic and administrative matters, implementation of the Convention, and consideration of proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II. This included the listing of seahorses, Basking and Whale sharks and Bigleaf mahogany in Appendix II, and rejection of the proposals to downlist populations of Minke and Bryde's whales from Appendix I to Appendix II. A proposal for an Appendix I listing for all African elephant populations was withdrawn, ceding to the COP's decision to allow three African States - Botswana, Namibia and South Africa - to sell a limited and strictly controlled amount of their registered ivory.

NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE ANIMALS

COMMITTEE: AC-19 met from 18-21 August 2003, in Geneva, Switzerland, to consider strategic planning, RST, review of criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II, periodic review of animal species included in the Appendices, transport of live animals, conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles, seahorses, sea cucumbers, sharks, hard corals, and trade in alien species.

50TH MEETING OF THE CITES STANDING

COMMITTEE: SC-50 met from 15-19 March 2004, in Geneva, Switzerland to consider, *inter alia*: the CITES Strategic Vision and Action Plan; financial and administrative matters; review of COP Resolutions and Decisions; arrangements for COP-13; and several species-related issues.

On elephants, the SC decided that the CITES Secretariat will receive information on rates of illegal hunting of elephants and trade in elephant specimens from existing systems monitoring the illegal killing of elephants and trade in elephant specimens, and will work with the Parties that report an increase in illegal hunting or trade to establish the potential linkage to commercial trade in raw ivory. If the SC concludes there has been an increase in illegal

hunting or trade, it will recommend that international trade in all specimens regarding the elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa be halted and will request that all Appendix II populations of the species be transferred to Appendix I. Regarding sturgeons, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan, the key caviar-producing countries, will have until mid-June to prove their cooperation with a Caspian-wide management system for combating overfishing, despite having missed the original deadline of 31 December 2003.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

On Monday, 29 March, AC Chair Thomas Althaus (Switzerland) welcomed delegates to AC-20. He highlighted the tasks before the AC, including: evaluation of the relationship between *ex situ* production and *in situ* conservation; review of significant trade in Appendix II species (RST); transport of live animals; and review of criteria for amendment of Appendices I or II. He also introduced David Morgan (UK), recently appointed Head of the CITES Secretariat's Scientific Unit.

Chair Althaus introduced, and delegates adopted, the Rules of Procedure (AC20 Doc. 2) with amendments, including the need to: make hard copies of meeting documents available to Parties upon request; submit documents for AC consideration at least 90 days before AC meetings; and attach the reports of the meeting's working groups, in their original language, to the executive summary of committee decisions. Several delegates expressed concern regarding the limited and late availability of documents. The Secretariat urged Parties to submit documents on time and in the required format.

Chair Althaus then introduced the agenda and working programme (AC20 Doc. 3.1 and 3.2). Mexico noted that even though it had submitted a proposed Appendix amendment prior to the deadline, this document did not appear on the agenda. Chair Althaus stressed that such proposals should be discussed at COP-13, not the AC. The US noted that the PC has set the precedent of discussing proposals, and that the purpose is not to discuss their adoption, but whether the information provided is sufficient. Chair Althaus suggested that such discussions be held informally. The agenda and working programme were adopted with minor amendments, as well as the admission of observers (AC20 Doc. 4), which included one UN agency, three IGOs, 18 international NGOs and 19 national NGOs.

Delegates met in an opening plenary on Monday, 29 March. Following a plenary session on Tuesday, 30 March, delegates broke into working groups, continuing to meet in all-day sessions on Wednesday, 31 March and in the afternoon on Thursday, 1 April. A final plenary session to review the outcomes of the working groups and other agenda items met on Friday, 2 April.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chair Althaus noted that the reports of the AC and PC Chairs at SC-50 were well received, and that the SC has agreed to a document, prepared intersessionally by a working group chaired by the US, on technical implementation issues, which designates the SC to act as a clearing house to channel issues classified as administrative, operational, policy or scientific. He informed AC delegates that the export quota working group met during SC-50 and agreed that the US would produce a synthesis of issues of concern, which



the working group would revise and distribute to Parties for discussion at COP-13. Nomenclature Committee Co-Chair Marinus Hoogmoed (the Netherlands) said that the validity of existing quotas should be established expeditiously. Chair Althaus said he intends to produce a report to COP-13, which will address all tasks set out for the AC by the COP.

ANIMALS COMMITTEE BUDGET

On Monday, Chair Althaus said that the AC's budget item (AC20 Doc. 7) had to be withdrawn following a reminder by the SC that the AC and PC do not have the mandate to discuss budgetary issues. He reiterated the COP decision, in light of budgetary considerations, to hold the AC and PC meetings back-to-back and that every other meeting take place in Geneva, Switzerland. Accordingly, PC-15 and AC-21 are scheduled to take place in Geneva in 2005.

Mexico, supported by Asia, Chile and Spain, said it was important to discuss the status of funding for each of the CITES technical committees, and that a report should indicate approved projects. PC Chair Margarita Clemente (Spain) noted the need for a mechanism to ensure financial support for candidates from developing countries to chair the PC and AC. Chile noted the financial constraints for delegates from the Central and South America and the Caribbean region to attend meetings, reminding the delegates that the region's representative could not attend COP-12 for this reason. Mexico suggested that the AC and PC request COP-13 to explore new financial resources to improve regional representation. The Netherlands noted a draft proposal formulated in a PC working group to improve regional representation and support for Committee Chairs when needed. Chair Althaus called on delegates to take up these issues at COP-13, but noted that the SC has already indicated that a budget increase for the next financial period was unlikely.

REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT TRADE IN SPECIMENS OF APPENDIX II SPECIES (RESOLUTION CONF. 12.8 AND DECISION 12.75)

On Monday, the Secretariat introduced several RST documents prepared since AC-19. He also reported on recent SC discussions on RST, noting progress on: implementation of recommendations on sturgeons in the Caspian Sea and *Naja naja* spp. (cobras) in Malaysia and Thailand; actions taken under the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) regarding Saiga antelopes; and a joint Saiga antelope work programme between CMS and CITES. The AC established a working group, chaired by AC Chair Althaus, to address progress on RST implementation, progress on the first RST country-based review, and selection of species for review.

PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT TRADE (PHASES V and VI):

On Monday, the Secretariat introduced the document (AC20 Doc 8.1), reporting that an immediate moratorium on export of *Strombus gigas* (queen conch) had been put in force in the Dominican Republic and Honduras, but not in Haiti. Concerning *Falco cherrug* (Saker falcon), he recommended a new resolution classifying range States according to the level of concern. Delegates stressed the need for information on the legal origin of birds, even if they are captive-bred, and on export destinations.

On Friday, Chair Althaus introduced the working group's report (AC20 WG1 Doc. 1) on the Saker falcon. He reported that few responses to the Secretariat's questionnaire had been received, and that all Parties that did not respond will remain under review. The Secretariat said that it would collect further information on range States where the implementation of Article IV on the regulation of trade in Appendix II species seems problematic, make a preliminary categorization of these States, and formulate short- and long-term recommendations. He announced a CITES workshop on falconry, falcon trade, breeding, poaching, and illegal trade in eggs and chicks, to be held in May 2004 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, which will involve both range States and countries with captive breeding operations. The recommendations regarding the RST in the Saker falcon were approved.

Review of the Implementation of Recommendations: On Monday, TRAFFIC International presented on the review of implementation of recommendations regarding RST (AC20 Doc. 8.2), highlighting a database containing all relevant information concerning species that are subject to RST. The US suggested that the database also include plants. Israel called for a clearing-house mechanism on the use of the database, and suggested that the database be tested and adjusted according to practical needs. Spain suggested that the database contain States' experiences with Convention implementation. Mexico stressed the need for information on follow-up activities and on population status. The Secretariat clarified that plants would be included in the database, which would be made available both on CD-Rom and the Internet after it is made more user-friendly. Delegates approved the document.

PROGRESS ON THE FIRST COUNTRY-BASED

REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT TRADE: On Monday, the Secretariat, in the absence of Madagascar, introduced progress on the RST in Madagascar (AC20 Doc. 8.3, Inf. 10 and 11). On the revised draft action plan, he invited the AC to consider how it wishes to be informed of the implementation of the action plan and to monitor progress. Delegates agreed to echo PC-14's recommendation and request Madagascar to report to each AC on implementation. Africa expressed hope that in the future a more rigorous mechanism would be adopted. Nomenclature Committee Co-Chair Hoogmoed cautioned that while the RST is projected to take over seven years, urgent action is required regarding threatened species. Africa called for a tighter timeframe, while Oceania noted that the action plan does include short-term goals. The US noted that deadlines would assist the Madagascar authorities. Spain emphasized the need for Madagascar to be present at the AC so it can implement recommendations effectively. The International Wildlife Coalition (IWC) recommended the adoption of a monitoring mechanism for progress. The World Wildlife Fund-US (WWF-US) suggested providing a short list of priority species, determining whether emergency action is required while the general process continues. Pro Wildlife requested that the country-based review not detract from other CITES processes.

On Friday, Chair Althaus introduced the RST working group's deliberations on progress on the first country-based RST (AC20 WG1 Doc. 1). He noted that the Secretariat will contact Madagascar concerning its absence and failure to report, and said Madagascar will be requested to report on urgent short-term actions prior to SC-51 and on all other short-term actions prior to AC-21. Urgent short-term activities identified by the working group include:



establishing terms of reference (TOR) for the Scientific Authority; providing background information on the conservation status of all Malagasy species; and designing and implementing an agreed, transparent quota setting system and a system to allow tracking of actual exports against quotas. He said other recommended short-term actions include:

- undertaking a cost-benefit analysis of wildlife trade;
- drawing up revised legislation;
- designing and implementing a mechanism for monitoring implementation of the action plan;
- designing a coordination and communications programme; and
- producing and distributing identifications manuals.

Noting Madagascar's failure to adequately report on its current export policy for CITES-listed species, he said the working group had recommended that the Secretariat contact Madagascar immediately to clarify whether an export moratorium is in place. The Secretariat said an export moratorium for plants is believed to be in place, but that this had not been formally communicated to the Secretariat.

Chair Althaus stressed that funding is critically needed to ensure the full implementation of the action plan, and noted the working group's recommendations that: funding be made available to ensure Madagascar's attendance at AC, PC and SC meetings to report on progress; Madagascar be requested to identify timeframes for accomplishing medium- and long-term actions, and report these timeframes prior to AC-21; and a technical advisor be appointed to oversee the implementation of the action plan.

The US enquired on actions in case Madagascar fails to report. The Secretariat said it would evaluate implementation in consultation with the AC and PC and, in case of insufficient implementation, formulate recommendations for the SC to decide on appropriate action. Cautioning against premature prediction, he said failure might result in partial suspension of trade, but that this is considered to be a last resort.

The Humane Society-US suggested, and delegates agreed to, setting clear deadlines for reporting by Madagascar. Noting that this review is also a case study for country-based RST, IWC suggested formulating clear recommendations to the SC regarding further discussions on case studies. Chair Althaus said the TOR of AC-20 do not include a general review of country-based RST, and that this issue will be discussed later. The International Wildlife Management Consortium - World Conservation Trust (IWMC) recalled that the PC's response to Madagascar's progress had been positive, and urged the AC to exercise flexibility to allow progress in a positive atmosphere. PC Chair Clemente noted that the PC felt it should be considerate towards Madagascar since it had volunteered to be under the spotlight. Nomenclature Committee Co-Chair Hoogmoed pointed out that Madagascar had not volunteered, but agreed to the country-based RST only after it had been nominated by the AC. The AC agreed that the AC and PC Chairs would ensure that the decisions of the two Committees are conveyed to Madagascar jointly.

EVALUATION OF THE REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT TRADE: On Monday, delegates discussed draft TOR for the RST evaluation (AC20 Doc. 8.4 and Inf. 17). The European Commission (EC) presented conclusions of a PC working group on issues that pertain to both the PC and the AC, including that: non-listed species should not be examined in detail, but there should be scope

to allude to possible effects on these species; and the review should not commence before COP-14. The Secretariat said it would prepare a cost assessment of the RST process before COP-13. Delegates agreed that the evaluation will commence immediately after COP-14, contingent on the availability of funds, and that one objective of the RST evaluation is to assess subsequent short- and long-term changes and whether these could be attributed to the process. The document was approved as amended.

SELECTION OF SPECIES FOR REVIEW: On Monday, Chair Althaus introduced the document on selection of species for review (AC20 Doc. 8.5). The United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) presented an analysis of trade trends in Appendix II animal species over ten years (1992-2002), which includes trade data for more than 1.3 million animal trade records. She added that in order to assist the AC in the selection process, a preliminary analysis was conducted using the slope and variance of trends over time, together with global and national conservation status information, to identify priority species. In total, 32 species and one genus were identified as possible candidates for inclusion in the RST.

Africa noted that half of the species listed are African and stressed the need to look at each species individually. Germany said that the process might need to include additional criteria for species affected by significant trade. The EC reminded delegates that budget constraints would affect the number of species that can be considered in the selection process. The Humane Society-US said that species included in a country-based review should not be excluded from the species review.

On Friday, Chair Althaus introduced the working group's recommendations (AC20 WG1 Doc. 1), noting that the working group identified, based on both UNEP-WCMC and TRAFFIC documents, priority species and taxa for RST inclusion. Regarding *Monodon monoceros* (Narwhal), the working group agreed to extend the deadline for Canada and Denmark to address the secondary recommendations until 31 July 2004. The working group decided that priority for inclusion in phase VI should be given to *Psittacus erithacus* (Grey parrot), *Callagur borneoensis* (Painted terrapin), five *Uromastix* (lizard) species, three *Phelsuma* (gecko) species, *Furcifer cephalolepis* (Comoros Island chameleon), and six *Tridacnidae* (giant clam) species. Other species identified for inclusion are *Poicephalus senegalus* (Senegal parrot) and *Gracula religiosa* (Common hill myna). In addition, concern was noted with regard to *Mantella* (frog) species and *Pandinus imperator* (Emperor scorpion). He said the working group was encouraged by the EU Scientific Review Group having independently reached similar conclusions.

The US said that its authorities have also reached these conclusions on the basis of the UNEP-WCMC documentation. Israel expressed concern that taxonomic difficulties lead to the exclusion of certain *Uromastix* species from inclusion and recommended including the entire group. Spain explained that only some *Uromastix* species were included in view of economic constraints. Nomenclature Committee Co-Chair Hoogmoed said that in his report to COP-13 he would suggest a new reference source for *Uromastix*. With regard to Narwhal, Chair Althaus clarified that results of the studies exist but have not been presented to the working group. Kenya requested that the AC consider the inclusion



of *Panthera leo* (African lion) in the RST. IWC drew attention to the importance of monitoring trade in *Pandinus imperator*. Delegates took note of the report, adopted the recommendations of the working group, and invited Kenya to provide a basis for considering *Panthera leo* at AC-21.

REVIEW OF THE CRITERIA FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II (DECISION 12.97)

On Monday, Chair Althaus introduced the criteria review evaluation (AC20 Doc. 9.1) containing a summary of comments made intersessionally by AC reviewers on the applicability of criteria and definitions. He added that this document would be considered in conjunction with the conclusions of PC-14 on this issue (AC20 Doc. 9.2 (Rev. 1)). A drafting group was formed to amend the criteria review.

On Thursday, the US and EC, drafting group Co-Chairs, presented the group's draft resolution (AC20 DG1 Doc. 1). They said that most changes to Annex 1 on biological criteria for Appendix I provide simplified language. Japan said that the criterion of a small number of sub-populations was incorrectly reported, and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) noted that the distribution in the criterion of large short-term fluctuations needs to be qualified. The Co-Chairs noted that changes in the criteria on a restricted area of distribution of the wild population and on a marked decline of the population size in the wild provide consistency in the text. The criterion of potential eligibility of a species for Appendix I listing remained bracketed.

Regarding Annex 2a on criteria for inclusion of species that merit listing, the drafting group reworded the criteria on the need for regulation of trade related to harvest to provide clarity. TRAFFIC and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) noted that this narrows the scope of the criterion considerably, and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) said that earlier wording was clear. South Africa explained that only the wording but not the content had changed.

The Co-Chairs noted changes to Annex 2b following PC proposals regarding the term "non expert," changes related to plants in Annex 3 concerning higher taxa, and additions to Annex 6 on the format for proposals to amend the Appendices requiring the proponent of a listing to justify the basis on which the species meets the relevant criteria. Delegates adopted the draft Annexes 1, 2a, 2b, 3 and 6, deferring Annexes 4 and 5 for later discussion.

On Friday, Co-Chairs US and EC continued presenting the report of the drafting group on review of the criteria (AC20 DG1 Doc. 1), noting amendments to clarify that numerical references are examples only and that different values are applicable to different taxa, particularly in the definitions of "area of distribution," "decline," "fluctuations" and "fragmentation," and "small" and "very small" wild populations. They indicated other amendments including: new references to productivity related to commercially exploited aquatic species; a new definition for "wild population"; elimination of "extended period" as it became redundant; an alternative definition for "inferred or projected" to that of the PC; modification of "near future" to provide consistency between Annex 2 and Annex 1 criterion D; and a reorganization of "vulnerability" factors. Responding to the Fund for Animals, the EC said that there was tacit understanding that with regard to commercially exploited

aquatic species, the definition of decline applies only to fish and invertebrates. WWF requested that this be recorded in the Chair's summary. The AC adopted the report.

PERIODIC REVIEW OF ANIMAL AND PLANT TAXA IN THE APPENDICES

On Monday, the US, Chair of the joint intersessional AC-PC periodic review working group, introduced guidelines for the review of Appendices I and II (AC20 Doc. 10 (Rev. 1)), highlighting the rapid assessment technique for the periodic review of the Appendices. He noted divergent opinions on priority objectives of the review. North America called for direct range States' involvement in conducting reviews. Asia enquired why a 10-year period was selected, and called for an option of maintaining a species on Appendix II while temporarily suspending trade. Japan said that the document should reflect AC-19's decision to give priority to Appendix II species with little or no recorded trade. Mexico opposed exemption from review of species that have been subject to RST during the previous 10 years as they may be more threatened. He also called for a distinction between reviewing the status of a species and RST, and recommended in-depth analysis for Appendix II species shown to be in decline or of concern. Nomenclature Committee Co-Chair Hoogmoed recalled the guidelines' stated objective of determining whether the listings continue to be appropriate.

On Tuesday, the US presented an updated rapid assessment technique flow chart (AC20 Doc. 10 Annex 2), taking into account the previous day's comments. He emphasized that the purpose of the flow chart is not to determine listings, but to assist in determining which species warrant focus and an in-depth review of listing. PC Chair Clemente added that this is a fast analysis to select a species for consideration, but that the AC and PC cannot directly make listing proposals.

On Friday, the US presented the outcomes of the drafting group on the review of criteria (AC20 Doc. 10 (Rev. 2)), highlighting that the flowchart process is a channeling mechanism to identify species for review and does not replace the listing procedure. He highlighted amendments to the report, including clarification that results are recommendations to the AC and elimination of references to RST. Defenders of Wildlife called for better presentation of the options regarding a species that had been traded internationally in the past 10 years and was declining. IWC noted the absence of mention of species that should remain subject to regulation for reasons other than similarity of appearance to a listed species. The US responded that criteria other than similarity are still debated, but that the flowchart can be modified in the future. Nomenclature Committee Co-Chair Hoogmoed requested the deletion of a note mentioning differing interpretations of the objective of the work. The AC adopted the report with the requested amendment.

PROCESS FOR REGISTERING OPERATIONS THAT BREED APPENDIX I ANIMAL SPECIES FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

On Tuesday, Chile, Chair of the intersessional working group on registering breeding operations, presented the report (AC20 Doc. 11), noting, *inter alia*, that: the registering process is too complicated; many Appendix I species were imported before the Convention's establishment, which hampers tracking the origin of



stocks; only range States should be allowed to veto registration; incentives for registering are lacking; and the process is inconsistent with some national laws.

Nomenclature Committee Co-Chair Hoogmoed stressed the need to define “commercial operation,” and suggested that proof of origin only be required for stocks exported after the Convention’s establishment. The US and China opposed allowing only range States to veto registration. The Netherlands and the EC said these administrative issues should be dealt with by a technical committee rather than the AC. Mexico called for transparency and consistency with provisions of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). China opined that the complicated process should not be an excuse not to register. PC Chair Clemente said registration of plant nurseries is voluntary and that this aims to promote the establishment of nurseries and artificial propagation in the countries of origin. The Humane Society-US called for incentives and assistance for registration of breeding operations, and said many Parties apply export codes inconsistently.

On Thursday, Chile presented the working group’s recommendations (AC20 WG3 Doc. 1), which include focusing on rendering the application process more user-friendly rather than amending Resolution Conf. 12.10 or its annexes, and that management authorities cooperate with captive breeding operations to prepare and submit applications. He highlighted a sample registration form, developed by Canada, which is available through the CITES website. Israel said trade in “laundered” Appendix I species and other illegal trade is an enforcement issue rather than an AC issue, and suggested that the SC investigate the level of unregistered commercial trade of Appendix I species and issue recommendations to combat this trade. The Secretariat noted that some recommendations, including that the Secretariat provide information on marking methods and identification codes, are already provided for, and cautioned against measures that would hamper the registration process.

On Friday, Chair Althaus presented a revised working group report (AC20 WG3 Doc. 1 (Rev. 1)), which recommends, *inter alia*, that the Secretariat issue a notification to the Parties recommending that they: work with captive breeding operations to facilitate preparing applications for registration; provide incentives to captive breeding operations to encourage them to register their operations; and ensure that all trade in Appendix I species is in accordance with Resolution Conf. 12.10 and Resolution Conf. 5.10. Delegates adopted the report.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EX SITU PRODUCTION AND IN SITU CONSERVATION

On Tuesday, North America, Chair of the intersessional working group on the relationship between *ex situ* production and *in situ* conservation, introduced the document (AC20 Doc. 12), emphasizing the need to increase taxonomic representativeness of the working group through participation of mega-diverse and tropical countries. He signaled the need to clarify the working group’s TOR. The Secretariat informed delegates that 80 case studies had been received. Africa indicated the need to harmonize *ex situ* production and *in situ* conservation at the national level, and to ensure transparency and accountability. The Netherlands stressed the need to identify possible strategies to enhance species conservation. The US, together with Mexico and IWC, noted overlap with

other working groups and non-CITES bodies, and the need to define goals. Defenders of Wildlife said the information has not yet been critically evaluated. The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) said that case study summaries reflect a misconception because the examination of *ex situ* operations was replaced by examination of *ex situ* production. WWF-US reminded participants that the Convention is premised on the need for economic incentives for species conservation and requested clarification on how the working group should address the relationship between trade in Appendix I captive-bred species and *in situ* conservation. Species Survival Network (SSN) said that the working group has gone off track by considering zoo programmes rather than registered commercial facilities. Delegates reconvened the working group to consider the issues further.

On Friday, North America presented the working group’s report (AC20 WG2 Doc. 1). Encouraging Parties to take a more active role in the discussion of this issue, he called for stronger recommendations regarding implementation and monitoring. He said the working group had worked closely together with the working group on the registration of captive breeding operations, and expressed hope that practical mechanisms would be implemented soon.

North America highlighted working group recommendations to issue a notification to the Parties requesting the submission of more case studies and to hire a consultant that will compile, analyze and synthesize the case studies. On ways of gathering information through the registration of captive breeding organizations, he said the working group recommended that registration applications include questions on how the operation will contribute to *in situ* conservation of the species in the areas of reintroduction, financial support, capacity building, education and public awareness, or any other area. He stressed that surveys that are more complex would discourage registration. Chair Althaus underscored the need for additional external funding.

The US voiced serious concern that this debate lies outside of the scope of CITES, as it has a purely philosophical nature and pertains mainly to benefit sharing. He questioned the feasibility of the suggested measures, particularly regarding financial support for conservation in the countries of origin, as taxation regulations are often strict and a single captive-bred species can have several countries of origin. He stressed that discussion on economic incentives for conservation already takes place within the SC.

Chair Althaus acknowledged these concerns, but clarified that the AC has been directed by the COP to address this issue and that it has a clear mandate to cooperate with zoo and aquarium organizations in this regard. He noted that the CITES Trust Fund will not finance the hiring of a consultant. The AC noted the report, taking the concerns expressed into consideration.

TRANSPORT OF LIVE ANIMALS

On Tuesday, Austria, Chair of the AC’s Transport Working Group (TWG) introduced the document (AC20 Doc. 13), noting the group’s work to assist in identifying model practices concerning the transport and preparation for shipment of live wild animals, and to develop recommendations to the Parties regarding the proper handling and transportation of live animals, particularly in exporting countries. He said that TWG members were asked to collect information from experts in the animal transport industry,



but to date no information had been received. He also noted collaboration with the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Animal Transport Association (AATA) and the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), and the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between CITES, IATA and WAZA.

The Netherlands stressed the importance of addressing local transport and storage issues, characterized by high mortality rates. Europe added that local transport and storage is a nature conservation problem, and that the issue should be addressed at COP-13. IWC noted that there is a non-detriment aspect to this issue that should be considered.

On Friday, Austria introduced the working group's recommendations (AC20 WG4 Doc. 1), including that: the AC use IATA Guidelines as the basic document and prepare an addendum of the different requirements for shipment of animals by road, rail, and ship. The TWG agreed: to prepare a draft addendum for AC-21; that the process of identifying model practices be maintained on the work programme of the AC; and that the AC request the Secretariat to contact IATA to finalize the MOU and request the opportunity to see the draft.

Europe said the MOU with IATA was unnecessary and requested that the draft be submitted to AC members. The Secretariat recalled that the decision is directed to the Secretariat and the AC is only consulted on the matter. He said that an existing draft was agreed to by the Secretariat and WAZA, but IATA rejected it, apparently for financial reasons. The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society requested that the NGOs that had provided information regarding transport of live animals be named and said that there had not been a consensus on requesting the finalization of the MOU. The AC noted the report and adopted the recommendations of the working group.

TRADE IN HARD CORALS

On Tuesday, the UK, Chair of the intersessional working group, introduced the document (AC20 Doc. 14). He said that the group has received suggestions on approaches to defining fossilized corals, but that there was no consensus on how to proceed, and the group might need to reconsider the fossil annotation. The Netherlands indicated that a solution was required as there were already customs problems.

On Friday, the UK presented the group's recommendations (AC20 WG5 Doc. 1), noting that the group's TOR was to consider and recommend a practical means of distinguishing fossilized corals from non-fossilized corals in international trade. On the proposed amendment to the Appendices, the group suggested amending an annotation, noting that fossils, namely all categories of coral rock, except live rock, are not subject to the provisions of the Convention. Regarding amendment to Resolution Conf. 12.3 on permits and certificates, the working group recommended that for trade in specimens that are readily recognizable as coral live rock, where the genus cannot be readily determined, the scientific name for the specimens should be *Scleractinia*. The working group also recommended that Parties that authorize the export of live coral should establish an annual quota for exports and communicate this quota to the Secretariat for distribution to Parties, and through the Scientific Authorities make an assessment based on a monitoring programme that such export will not affect the role that

live rock has in ecosystems affected by the extraction of such specimens. The Chair added that an identification manual describing various types of specimens likely to be encountered by enforcement officials could be supported.

Responding to an IWC query to the ecological impact of removing substrate, the Chair said that the volume and size of the coral base of these non-CITES organisms are insignificant. Oceania and the Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association supported the working group's recommendations, which were adopted by the AC.

CONTROL OF CAPTIVE BREEDING, RANCHING AND WILD HARVEST PRODUCTION SYSTEMS FOR APPENDIX II SPECIES

On Tuesday, Africa, Chair of the captive breeding, ranching and wild harvest production systems working group established at AC-19, said the group had not worked intersessionally, but drew attention to a draft review of production systems prepared by the IUCN (AC20 Inf. 15). The US expressed concern that the original issue with which the working group was tasked had grown out of control, and introduced its proposals on designating codes to production systems (AC20 Inf. 18).

On Friday, Africa presented the report (AC20 WG6 Doc. 1), highlighting recommendations to:

- uphold major AC-19 recommendations to maintain existing codes D, F, D, R and W;
- use code C only for animals bred in captivity in accordance with Resolution Conf. 10.16;
- amend code R to include operations other than those linked to down-listing from Appendix I to II;
- redefine "ranching";
- define code F;
- maintain the definition of code D;
- rename code I "Y" to prevent confusion between it and Appendix I;
- use code W as a default code for wildlife specimens of animals;
- form a joint AC-PC working group at COP-13 to examine existing documents; and
- develop guidelines for production systems and source codes, including elements that should be considered in making non-detriment findings within each production system.

The US commended the working group on refocusing its work and said that the US would submit a discussion document on production systems at COP-13. North America emphasized the need to build on existing work. PC Chair Clemente said that PC-14 had agreed to continue work at PC-15 and not submit recommendations to COP-13. The AC took note of the report.

CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN SEA CUCUMBERS IN THE FAMILIES OF HOLOTHURIDAE AND STICHOPODIDAE

On Tuesday, the Secretariat presented documents on conservation and trade in sea cucumbers (AC20 Doc. 18 and Inf. 14). He reported on the outcomes of a technical workshop on sea cucumbers held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in March 2004, which aimed to: review information on sea cucumbers' status, catches, by-catches and trade; establish conservation priorities and actions; and formulate findings and recommendations towards the AC discus-



sion paper to be presented to COP-13. He stressed the workshop's findings should be considered in conjunction with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) workshop on sea cucumber aquaculture and management held in Dalian, China, in October 2003.

Asia reported on the number of species of commercial value and noted that five levels of concern had been identified. Ornamental Fish International said that general trade requirements often apply only to consumption trade and thus hamper ornamental high-value trade. IWC called for a list of candidate species for CITES Appendices. Japan said trade in sea cucumbers is a matter of national fisheries management rather than international trade, and that reports about population decreases often only take into account local stocks. Noting a lack of scientific information, international cooperation and consideration of developing countries' local economies, he opposed any CITES listing of sea cucumbers. A working group was convened to discuss the issue further.

On Friday, Asia, Chair of the working group, introduced the group's deliberations (AC20 WG7 Doc. 1), noting lack of consensus on proposed national management options and adaptive management strategies, and consideration of the format and content of the discussion document for COP-13. Recommendations directed to the Secretariat include consulting with FAO to continue its efforts to:

- address the challenges of managing sea cucumber fisheries for sustainability;
- evaluate voluntary measures for trade monitoring and export control;
- seek financial support to continue activities intersessionally;
- evaluate actions taken by Parties; and
- work with the World Customs Organization (WCO) to develop harmonized customs codes.

Recommendations to Parties include: urging their Fishery Agencies to act accordingly, with such actions as research on biology, fisheries and trade; urging CITES Scientific and Management Authorities to improve coordination with their fisheries management agencies; and exploring the benefits of trade certification through appropriate organizations. The working group also requested the AC to review the outputs of the technical workshop on sea cucumbers, in dialogue with FAO, and give opinions on the feasibility and priorities of proposed recommendations.

The Secretariat noted duplication of recommendations directed to it, while Chair Althaus noted that there was neither time nor funding for implementation of the request to the AC. The US undertook to compile available information for presentation at COP-13. The AC agreed to submit to COP-13 a discussion paper describing progress and time and financial constraints, and incorporating the requests formulated by the working group.

BIOLOGICAL AND TRADE STATUS OF SHARKS

On Tuesday, Oceania, Chair of the intersessional shark working group, introduced a document on the biological and trade status of sharks (AC20 Doc. 19). He noted the need to continue reviewing progress in implementing FAO's International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks) and to consider a list of traded species (AC20 Inf. 2). He also noted that the working group had been tasked with developing species-specific recommendations for COP-13, including an Australian proposal to list the Great white shark in Appendix I.

WCS presented the results of a Great white shark workshop held in New York, in January 2004 (AC20 Inf. 1), identifying commercial fisheries, recreational fisheries, local fisheries, bather protection programmes, and ecotourism and habitat deterioration as the main threats to white shark populations. He added that international management measures for shark populations are essential.

The IUCN-Shark Specialist Group (IUCN-SSG) reported on the implementation of IPOA-Sharks (AC20 Inf. 5), noting that 63 States had reported some progress towards implementing IPOA-Sharks, but that 32 States, including four major shark-fishing States, said they would not implement it. She added that improving data collection, monitoring and management would require assistance with capacity building from other States and support from the AC. The FAO highlighted activities to facilitate and encourage its member States to implement IPOA-Sharks, including provision of technical assistance, preparation of field guides for monitoring shark landings and trends, and promotion of the development of national action plans. The working group met to review progress on IPOA-Sharks implementation and to assist in making species-specific recommendations for COP-13.

On Friday, Oceania presented the report (AC20 WG8 Doc. 1). Regarding the use of a system compatible with the WCO code system, he said that the working group cautioned against too complex a system, calling for further consultation with the WCO and FAO.

Regarding species-specific recommendations, Oceania said the working group had fulfilled its TOR by assessing progress and providing feedback on draft listing proposals, but stressed that it is not in the working group's mandate to recommend listings to Parties.

Regarding the Spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*), Oceania said the working group had agreed that the species meets the criteria for an Appendix II listing. He outlined recommendations, including that:

- range States and regional fishery management organizations take steps to improve data collection and management;
- EU member State Parties urgently seek and implement scientific advice on developing a conservation plan;
- range States develop precautionary and adaptive management measures; and
- Parties report catches, landings and trade data to FAO and train customs officials in using existing codes.

Regarding the Porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*), the group agreed that the species meets the criteria for an Appendix II listing. He outlined recommendations, including that: members of the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas collect and report data on catches and discards of Porbeagle sharks and undertake stock assessments; the US and Canada establish a research and management programme for their shared stock; and the WCO establish a harmonized international code.

Regarding the White shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*), the group agreed that the species meets the criteria for an Appendix II listing although the proposal is currently drafted for listing in Appendix I, and that some of the relevant international agreements are not being sufficiently implemented.



Concerning freshwater stingrays (family Potamotrygonidae), the group recommended that: range States examine cross-border trade that may facilitate illegal trade, and consider an Appendix III listing to control illegal exports; and more information be collected on species abundance, distribution and trend data.

Oceania drew attention to an IUCN-SSG review (AC20 Inf. 21), which lists species of special concern.

On sawfishes (family Pristidae), the working group recommended that range State Parties urgently undertake a review of the species' status and, if necessary, undertake measures to reduce extinction risk.

On Gulper sharks (genus *Centrophorus*), Oceania recalled that an FAO Deep Sea Workshop in December 2003 had recommended that "a precautionary approach is absolutely essential," including monitoring of catches, landings and trade, preparation of good identification guides, improved use of observers, and development of standard carcass forms to improve reporting. He said the working group recommended that Parties support this approach. On the School, Tope, or Soupfin shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*), the working group recommended that range States request FAO's assistance with developing a capacity-building workshop for managers.

Oceania also noted that the working group identified three taxonomic groups that deserve special attention: Requiem sharks (genus *Carcharhinus*), Guitarfishes and Shovelnose rays (order Rhinobatiformes), and Devil rays (family Mobulidae). He said the working group urged, *inter alia*: the development of new international instruments, regional agreements and regional fisheries management organizations; the adoption of science-based shark conservation standards; and the development of waterproof identification guides. On the CITES sharks work programme, Oceania said the working group recommended that further work be undertaken to identify and prioritize additional key species, including through an intersessional sharks workshop.

Japan expressed strong objections to CITES listing of shark species, arguing that shark conservation and management are the responsibility of specialized fisheries management organizations. Underlining that the subject is highly controversial and that more time is needed to study the document, he suggested that the AC take note of the report, rather than adopt it. Singapore said the AC should take a neutral position and refrain from agreeing on species' unfavorable conservation status. Chair Althaus stressed that the AC's Mandate is to consider shark listings. Upon Japan's request, the AC noted the report.

IMPROVING REGIONAL COMMUNICATION AND REPRESENTATION

On Tuesday, the Netherlands introduced work conducted by the PC on improving regional communication and representation (AC20 Doc. 5.7 and Inf. 16), highlighting recommendations to amend Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev COP-12) so that: representatives would only be accepted upon written commitment from their government and institution and from themselves; representatives would be evaluated periodically by the Committee; a regional representation manual be developed; and details of national contact persons be distributed. Europe cautioned that in many developing States and States with economies in transition, governmental support is unavailable and representatives operate in their personal

capacity. Supported by Oceania, she suggested that the regions, rather than the Committee, evaluate the representatives. Asia called for improvement of the communication mechanism. Africa called for measures to encourage African participation and interest. Chair Althaus added that the simultaneous functioning of the PC and AC Chairs as regional representatives should be avoided. Chile noted the repeated absence of the representatives of the South and Central America and the Caribbean region, and called for more proportional representation based on regional size. The AC convened a working group to consider further action.

On Friday, the Netherlands, working group Chair, introduced the report (AC20 WG9 Doc. 1). Regarding regional representation in the AC and PC, the group recommended that proposals for candidates as representatives be supported by relevant governments and institutions in a formal commitment, and that the names of proposed candidates and their formal commitment be circulated to the Parties of the region concerned. Regarding the establishment of Committees, the group recommended that the Secretariat reimburse travel expenses upon request, including attendance of relevant Committee meetings and of the COP, and other expenses of the Chairs of the SC, AC and PC, in particular from developing States and States with economies in transition.

The group also recommended the following draft decisions directing the Secretariat to:

- assist the Chair in consulting regions, if needed;
- issue a notification in 2005 that all Parties must inform the Secretariat on the name and address of the contact persons for the PC and AC before 1 April 2005;
- publish a register of contact persons on the CITES website;
- produce an annual calendar for regional representatives; and
- verify whether the level of communication of information from the Secretariat to regional representatives is sufficient and send all relevant information in CITES issues directly to all representatives in hard copy or by e-mail.

The group also recommended that the AC and PC form a joint drafting group with the Secretariat and the Netherlands to develop a manual in 2005.

The Chair noted that the recommendations carry financial implications. Asia requested that the Secretariat send an invitation to ensure that the Asian representative is on his or her country's delegation to COP-13. PC Chair Clemente queried about the mechanism to replace alternate representatives who give up their position before an election, suggesting that the regions should have the mandate to do so. IWMC noted the issue deserves serious examination, but that it is the duty of the SC to review technical implementation matters. The AC noted the working group's report.

REGIONAL REPORTS

On Thursday and Friday, regional representatives presented their regions' reports.

ASIA: A regional representative for Asia presented the report (AC20 Doc. 5.2), highlighting a seminar on regional cooperation for sustainable fisheries held in December 2003 in Tokyo, Japan, and a workshop on the conservation of sea cucumbers held in March 2003 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

AFRICA: A regional representative for Africa presented the report (AC20 Doc. 5.1), noting continued communication difficulties resulting in no responses for regional input, and that all Parties



had been requested to contribute to a directory of scientific authorities, but there had been no responses. He added that due to continuing civil unrest, regional and international agreements such as CITES are not adhered to. He welcomed the development of websites presenting national CITES-related information, but said that only Kenya and South Africa have created such websites.

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: In the absence of the regional representative and a regional report, Chile reported on the region's activities. He said that although the regional involvement in CITES had not improved, many activities had been undertaken since COP-12, including on the conservation of the *Strombus gigas* (Queen conch) and Caribbean marine turtles.

EUROPE: Chair Althaus, regional representative for Europe, presented the report (AC20 Doc. 5.4), stressing the need to avoid the AC Chair also acting as a regional representative. Asia noted that this requires amending the Rules of Procedure, since these prescribe that the Chair be elected from among the regional representatives. IWMC added that the corresponding resolution would need to be amended. Chair Althaus said the Secretariat would consider this issue. Hungary, the other regional representative for Europe, noted that Slovenia and Italy are preparing a proposal to include the *Lithophaga lithophaga* (Date shell) in Appendix II, and noted that a directory of experts similar to the one prepared for the PC still needs to be established for the AC. Spain highlighted its commitment to translate into Spanish the electronic version of the Identification Manual.

NORTH AMERICA: The North American regional representative presented the report (AC20 Doc. 5.5), noting effective collaboration among the three North American countries and with the other regions. He reiterated Mexico's concern regarding the absence on the agenda of its document on *Amazona finschi* (Finsch's amazon), highlighted seminars held on the conservation of sea cucumbers and on research and capacity building, and noted the completion of reviews on the conservation status of the *Dermatemys mawii* (White turtle) and the *Ambystoma mexicanum* (Mexican axolotl). Mexico said preparatory meetings for COP-13 would be held in April 2004 in Guatemala and in September 2004 in Mexico. Noting the good cooperation between Mexico and the Central American countries, the Netherlands suggested merging the two American regions to improve South and Central American participation.

OCEANIA: The regional representative for Oceania presented the report (AC20 Doc. 5.6). He noted cooperation with TRAFFIC regarding information provision and capacity building. He said that the next regional capacity-building workshop, to be held in June 2004, in Fiji, would promote non-Parties' participation in CITES activities, and noted a significant increase in the export of many species from the Solomon Islands, a non-Party. Regarding building regional networks of expertise, PC Chair Clemente described the development of the PC's directory of experts. The Netherlands suggested that experts' directories be available on the CITES website.

CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES

On Thursday, Africa, Chair of the intersessional working group, noted a draft report based on work done at AC-19 and recommendations from a technical workshop on conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles held in Kunming, China, in March 2002. Noting little response to the draft report, particularly from the range States, he said the document recommended establishing national and regional fora to coordinate issues on a regional basis, given the numerous cross-cutting issues within the region. He emphasized that the report's objectives require funding and invited NGOs' assistance. On pancake tortoises, IUCN's Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group reported on-going activities, including cooperation with Zambia and Tanzania, two range States. The Secretariat reported that it has produced a standard reporting format for implementation of the resolution on tortoises and freshwater turtles.

On Friday, Africa reported on draft recommendations to be forwarded as decisions for COP-13 consideration (AC20 WG10 Doc. 1). Recommendations directed to the Secretariat include:

- facilitating the compilation and provision of information for the use by enforcement officers;
- contacting the WCO regarding the possibility of obtaining specific harmonized codes for turtles and turtle products in trade;
- facilitating the development on non-detriment finding guidelines, building on the existing IUCN guidelines;
- facilitating development of partnerships between interested organizations or other bodies, in cooperation with range States, to develop and operate rescue centers for confiscated tortoises and freshwater turtles;
- encouraging NGOs to develop, produce and distribute appropriate materials for public education and awareness; and
- making available the proceedings of the Kunming workshop.

The working group also drafted recommendations directed to Parties to: develop proposals to include threatened species in the appropriate Appendices, with reference to recommendations contained in the results of the Kunming workshop; and ensure that transport of live tortoises and freshwater turtles complies with IATA guidelines.

A sub-working group on Pancake tortoises (*Malacochersus tornieri*), chaired by IUCN, identified four priority actions: an investigation of genetic variability among wild populations and farm stock; verification of occurrence in States that are not currently regarded as range States; inspection of farms with regard to captive management conditions; and completion of the desktop review of the species.

The US stressed that it did not object to submission of species proposals, but said that the recommendations should be directed to the Parties for COP discussion, and not as draft decisions. IWC encouraged Parties to list species on Appendix III as a means of overcoming controversial listing issues. The Secretariat noted that several recommendations should be directed to the AC rather than the Secretariat. The AC adopted the report, to be considered at COP-13.



SEAHORSES AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY SYNGNATHIDAE

On Thursday, Project Seahorse, Chair of the intersessional working group, introduced the document (AC20 Doc. 17), noting that a universal 10 cm minimum size limit for *Hippocampus* serves as a biologically appropriate means to make non-detrimental findings for seahorses. She added that the minimum size limit is voluntary and applies to animals captured in the wild, not those bred in captivity. She reminded delegates that *Hippocampus* species were listed under Appendix II at COP-12, but the listing only comes into effect on 15 May 2004.

Oceania acknowledged that the measurement system is an adaptive process that can be refined based on new information. Japan expressed concern regarding a universal size limit, stressing that it would stop harvest and trade of all seahorses whose maturity size is below 10 cm. He added that CITES should further postpone the Appendix listing until implementation problems are solved. The US reminded delegates that the minimum size limit is a voluntary measure and only one component of seahorse management. Singapore acknowledged problems associated with listing all seahorses in Appendix II when some are not affected by trade, and, with China, said that the minimum size limit does not address by-catch issues. Mexico offered to circulate the results of a workshop it held on seahorse fishery management in February 2004. Chair Althaus said the proposed minimum size limit would be sent as a notification to Parties and that the issue is open to amendment based on future scientific information.

TRADE IN ALIEN SPECIES

On Thursday, Oceania, Chair of the intersessional working group, reported that the work on alien species had been completed, but that voluntary work is ongoing in cooperation with the IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG). Chile described the ISSG work programme, which involves 10,000 specialists worldwide and is conducted in cooperation with the CBD. North America recommended revising the CBD's Guiding Principles on Alien Species that Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species to facilitate implementation in the context of CITES. He stressed the importance of synergies and increased information availability to avoid duplication of efforts, and recommended the preparation of a dynamic database that would include potentially invasive species. PC Chair Clemente reported that the PC had not worked on this issue, and called for increased cooperation with the CBD.

IDENTIFICATION MANUAL

On Thursday the Secretariat reported on progress regarding the Identification Manual (AC20 Doc. 22.1). He said the database with all the available identification sheets had been completed and that it is currently being converted into electronic format.

STANDARD TAXONOMY AND NOMENCLATURE

On Thursday, Nomenclature Committee Co-Chair Hoogmoed reported on the work of the Committee, noting discussion on transparency and regional representation, and on new standard references. North America expressed regret that the Nomenclature Committee's report is not available in print. Co-Chair Hoogmoed reminded participants that the Nomenclature Committee reports to the COP and not to the AC, but indicated his intention to distribute a written report following the AC. Participants reiterated the need

to clarify the role of checklists other than the basic or standard references. The AC took note of the Nomenclature Committee's oral report and the comments made.

OTHER ISSUES

On Thursday and Friday the Secretariat presented draft executive summaries of the meeting (AC20 Sum. 1, 2, and 3). Participants suggested technical amendments to be incorporated into a later draft.

On Friday, PC Chair Clemente noted a Masters' course on management, access and conservation of species in trade offered at the University of Córdoba, Spain, and asked the AC to echo a PC-14 request to COP-13 for financial support. The AC decided to introduce appropriate wording in the Chair's report.

CLOSING REMARKS

Chair Althaus thanked all participants and the interpreters for their hard work. He also thanked the Government of South Africa for hosting a very successful meeting. Oceania and IWC, on behalf of participating NGOs, thanked the Chair for his energy and guidance. The meeting came to a close at 6:25 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF AC-20

Although the CITES Animals Committee met in South Africa, one of the world's most popular destinations for observing wildlife, the closest delegates actually got to seeing the Big Five - lions, leopards, elephants, buffalos and rhinoceroses - was on the Rand notes they spent at the airport casino/hotel where the meeting was held. Nevertheless, despite being far removed from the African savannah, and given that COP-13 is only six months away, the AC managed to address the numerous animal-related resolutions and decisions directed to it by the COP. As usual, NGOs made up almost a third of participants and played a lead role in advancing the issues. Issues of considerable importance included the criteria review of listings in the Appendices, the Review of Significant Trade, and a range of marine-related issues, such as sharks, sea cucumbers, hard corals, seahorses, and tortoises and freshwater turtles. Despite these accomplishments, several challenges face the AC and, for the success of the Convention, must be addressed by the Parties. These include the role of the AC in considering species and budget implications on regional representation. This analysis will address these key issues that are having an impact on the CITES regime.

WHERE ARE THE SPECIES PROPOSALS?

AC-20 can be easily characterized as being heavy on procedural matters and light on scientific discussion. As one delegate saw it, the AC reminded him more of a mini-COP rather than of a committee dedicated exclusively to scientific review. Mexico tried to get back to the scientific agenda, with an attempt to discuss a potential COP-13 proposal to transfer Finsch's amazon, a parrot considered to be one of the country's most threatened bird species, from Appendix II to Appendix I. However, despite the proposal's submission well in advance of the AC-20 deadline, it did not appear on the agenda or even as an information document. In fact, the Chair said that such matters fall outside the AC mandate and should be discussed informally.



Some delegates questioned the AC's *raison d'être* if it could not discuss potential species listings, but others noted that the AC traditionally concentrated on implementation issues. Despite this tradition, two German proposals on shark species did make it to the agenda as information documents and were discussed in a sharks working group. Apparently, discussing sharks was a specific part of the AC's mandate through a COP-12 decision, whereas parrots and other species were not. The sharks working group also noted that Australia, who did not attend the AC, was considering the submission of a Great white shark listing proposal, while another working group indicated that additional tortoises and freshwater turtles listing proposals may also be in the works.

Several delegates were pleased to see marine species receive the attention they deserve, particularly after the success of listing several marine species at COP-12, such as seahorses and the Basking and Whale sharks. However, some delegates wondered if this new trend would be at the expense of discussing other animal species, while a few other Parties hoped that this marine trend would simply disappear altogether. Parties, including Mexico with its parrot proposal, still have until 5 May to submit their listing proposals for COP-13 consideration, so not all is lost for non-marine species.

WHERE IS THE MONEY?

Improving regional communication and regional representation is an issue that received wide attention at PC-14 held last month in Namibia, and became an equally recurring theme at the AC. Many regional representatives and delegates, particularly from developing countries, noted growing difficulties in fulfilling their functions due to budget constraints and lack of government support. Chile said the problem has become so severe that it was getting harder for delegates from the Central and South America and the Caribbean region to attend meetings. The fact that the regional representatives for this region were unable to attend AC-20 is a case in point. Even Madagascar, a country located not too far from South Africa, could not make it to the AC and was unable to respond to an important discussion on the first country-based Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix II species (RST), which took place in Madagascar.

But developing countries were not the only ones who voiced their concerns. The AC Chair, who hails from Europe, complained that the double function of being both Chair and regional representative, according to the existing Rules of Procedure, creates an excessively heavy workload and compromises the Chair's ability to carry out his role. An AC working group on improving regional communication, similar to the one convened at PC-14, addressed the issues, offering several recommendations for consideration at COP-13. Still, many delegates felt the regional representatives would not get the support they so desperately need, particularly financial support, given the Standing Committee's indication that a budget increase for the next period was unlikely. If this is the case, it could further exacerbate the already tenuous role they play in representing their regions.

WHERE NEXT?

Now that the AC has come to an end, delegates are setting their sites on Bangkok and COP-13. Although some delegates felt disappointed that some species proposals did not get the attention they deserved, others expressed satisfaction with the results of some of

the more technical processes, particularly the Review of Significant Trade and evaluation of the criteria for amendment for Appendices I and II. Many believe that the RST process is a major tool for overseeing the trade status of species on the Appendices and ultimately, determining guidance for actions to be taken on CITES-listed species. There were, however, some delegates who felt that the RST process has not been followed up as well as it could be, citing delays in the various phases of the review. However, since the RST is an ongoing process, taking on a new round of species to review, many believe the process will improve with time.

The review of criteria also proved to be a success, incorporating much of the work done by the PC on the same issue. Despite the lengthy drafting group discussions, many delegates felt it was worth the effort. This issue is seen as key to the Convention, since it determines the foundation for listing species on the Appendices. It was widely viewed that the harmonized AC-PC document will be well received at COP-13. AC delegates also hoped that all their hard work they spent on addressing, and in many cases completing, the issues assigned to it would be equally well received at the COP.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE COP-13

11TH MEETING OF THE ASCOBANS ADVISORY

COMMITTEE: The Advisory Committee of the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS) will take place from 27-29 April 2004, in Jastrzebia Góra, Poland. For more information, contact: ASCOBANS Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2416; fax: +49-228-815-2440; e-mail: ascobans@ascobans.org; Internet: <http://www.ascobans.org>

9TH MEETING OF THE EUROBATS ADVISORY

COMMITTEE: The Advisory Committee of the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (EUROBATS) will convene from 17-19 May 2004, in Vilnius, Lithuania. For more information, contact: EUROBATS Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2420; fax: +49-228-815-2445; e-mail: info@eurobats.org; Internet: <http://www.eurobats.org>

6TH INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE RANCHING

SYMPOSIUM: This symposium will take place from 6-9 July 2004, in Paris, France, to provide a forum to interact and exchange information and ideas on all aspects of wildlife conservation as a tool for sustainable development. For more information, contact: the International Foundation for the Conservation of Wildlife; fax: +33-1-5659-7756; e-mail: igf@fondation-igf.fr; Internet: <http://www.wildlife-conservation.org>

56TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING

COMMISSION: The International Whaling Commission will hold its annual meeting from 19-22 July 2004, in Sorrento, Italy, to assess current trends in whale stocks and regulations for the whaling industry. For more information, contact: IWC Secretariat; tel: +44-1223-233971; +44-1223-232876; e-mail: secretariat@iwcoffice.org; Internet: <http://www.iwcoffice.org>

13TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE

PARTIES TO CITES: CITES COP-13 will meet from 2-14 October 2004, in Bangkok, Thailand. For more information, contact: CITES Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-8139; fax: +41-22-797-3417; e-mail: cites@unep.ch; Internet: http://www.cites.org/eng/news/meetings/CoP13_dates.shtml